



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department Of *Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services*

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COMMISSIONER

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Dear Virginia Tobacco Retailer:

Congratulations on doing your part to keep tobacco out of the hands of underage youth in Virginia!

This summer you participated in Virginia's first "No ID, No Tobacco, No Excuses" campaign, designed to reinforce the law prohibiting tobacco sales to youth. We sent you posters, window decals, counter decals and lapel stickers to help remind you and your clerks to:

- Check identification of all young adults;
- Check birth dates and remember that drivers' licenses for those under 18 have a distinctive design; and
- Meet with all shift supervisors and clerks to make sure they understand the law, know how to check identification, and understand the fines and penalties for failing to do so.

The Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) Board sent its agents out to check your store. Inspections were conducted by a trained underage buyer who, working under close supervision of two adult agents, asked to buy cigarettes. If you and your clerks upheld the law, you may never have known that you were visited. If, however, you failed to check identification, or checked identification but sold the tobacco product anyway, the adult agent issued a summons for a court appearance that may have resulted in a fine of up to \$500.

The Commonwealth must not exceed a violation rate of more than 20 percent in the selected random sample of outlets. That means that at least 80 percent of you must enforce the law. If the Commonwealth exceeds this limit, your community could lose its ability to treat alcoholics and drug addicts, and to educate and prevent young people from using and becoming dependent on alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.

Thanks to the Commonwealth's diligent efforts to enforce this law and your careful checking of identification and calculating birth dates, we achieved a **compliance rate of 82 percent!** Virginia will be awarded 100 percent of the funds it is eligible to receive that support community-based treatment for, and prevention of, alcoholism and drug addiction.

This Department and the ABC Board will continue to work with you to improve compliance with this law. We are proud of the 82 percent compliance rate, but we know that we can do even better. Remember,

- Keep checking identification and calculating birth dates.
- For every three teenagers who start to smoke, one will die of tobacco-related illnesses.
- Parents in your community don't want their children to smoke.
- Every time you enforce the law, you are teaching that teenager that all laws are important.
- Virginia could lose money dedicated to preventing and treating alcoholism and drug addiction if you don't enforce the law.

I have enclosed an information sheet about substance abuse services available in Virginia communities. Thanks for doing your part!

Very truly yours,

Richard E. Kellogg

Xc: Governor James Gilmore
Governor-elect Mark Warner